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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Card Catalogue Summaries. — The last twenty-five years have been noteworthy for the active and successful efforts in organizing the ever-increasing literature of the natural sciences, and the publication of magazines devoted exclusively to the listing of new contributions is now a well-established feature of natural-history work. The advantage of interpolation which the card catalogue system has over the book form of publication is gradually being recognized, and we may now be said to be fairly launched in an experiment for the card cataloguing of all zoölogical literature. The immensity of such an undertaking can be appreciated from the rate at which the card catalogue now issued by the Concilium Bibliographicum at Zurich has grown, and by the largeness of even the more moderate of the proposals in the scheme advanced by the Royal Society of London. One of the difficulties which all these projects meet is that of getting at the substance of a paper for the purposes of classification. Although the rhetorical title is largely a thing of the past, the best contrived title is not always sufficient to indicate the full scope of a paper, and recourse must be made, even for simple bibliographical classification, to the body of the work itself. The growing custom of concluding each paper with a brief summary helps much in this respect, but it is inferior, in our opinion, to the plan now being pursued by the editor of the *American Journal of Physiology*. This consists in the issuance with each number of the journal of a sheet of index slips for the contributions published in the given number. Each slip is headed by a full bibliographical reference for the paper which it represents, followed by a very brief abstract (not more than 125 words) of the substance of the paper, and so compactly printed that the whole slip can be pasted, if desired, on a card for catalogue arrangement. This plan possesses the great advantage of having the abstracting done by the author himself, and yet under restrictions as to length from the editor, so that a uniform slip is obtained which is perhaps the most serviceable form in which the paper could be presented for classification. Should all journals which publish original scientific matter adopt this plan, we feel sure that the work of the scientific bibliographer would be immensely aided ; nor are we inclined to believe

that the plan would react in any disadvantageous way on the authors. The preparation of restricted abstracts, such as this plan requires, is at least an exercise in concise composition.

The Introduction of Exotic Animals.—The Yearbook of the U. S. Department of Agriculture for 1898 contains a most important and interesting paper by Mr. T. S. Palmer, entitled “The Danger of Introducing Noxious Animals and Birds.” Though Mr. Palmer uses animals and mammals as synonymous terms, his subject would bear more extended treatment. The need of legislation to prevent the importation of species which may become injurious is well and temperately stated; scientific men, however, should unite in preserving the integrity of the natural faunas and floras, and should urge that all laws made to forbid the introduction of exotic species include Mongolian pheasants introduced for sport, and skylarks brought here for the charm of their song.

Colors of Deep-Sea Animals.—In a paper of this title (*Rept. Iowa Acad. Sci., 1898*) Dr. C. C. Nutting explains the occurrence of bright pigments and well-developed eyes in animals from great depths by the existence there of a phosphorescent light emanating from the animals themselves, and in support of his idea advances the fact that cave animals, on the other hand, are colorless and blind. We wish to point out that Dr. Walter Faxon in his report on the Stalk-Eyed Crustacea of the *Albatross* expedition (*Mem. Mus. Comp. Zool., Vol. XVIII, 1895*) devotes a special chapter to the colors of deep-sea Crustacea, and suggests the existence at great depths of a phosphorescent light; and he also emphasizes the opposite conditions existing in cave animals. The prevailing red tints of deep-sea forms are explained by Faxon through simple physiological reactions in the chromatophores owing to the absence of bright light, and in support of his theory cites some of the experiments of Pouchet on shore forms.